

Reference: 01600195

Information Requests  
[information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk)

15 May 2023

### Freedom of Information request: Right to know request

Thank you for your request for information concerning cyber attacks. Your request was received on 17 April 2023 and we have considered it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the "FOI Act").

#### Your request & our response

##### *The number of reports of cyber attacks reported to Ofcom*

Cyber attacks are not reported to Ofcom. We have taken this question to mean the number of cyber attacks detected by Ofcom on our internal systems, which are as follows:

Blocked intrusions per week:	30,000
Failed logons per week:	2000
Phishing emails per week:	4000
Malware per week:	80

##### *A breakdown of this by type of attack eg business email compromise, ransomware etc*

We have provided a breakdown above, which covers a period of 1 week. We are not able to provide further detail due to cyber security reasons. The information you requested is being withheld as we consider that it is exempt from disclosure under section 31(1)(a) of the FOI Act. This part of the act deals with information that, if disclosed, would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime.

Section 31(1)(a) of the FOI Act is a qualified exemption which means that we have had to consider whether or not the public interest in disclosing the information you have requested outweighs the public interest in withholding the information. In this case, we consider the public interest favours withholding the information.

The attached Annex in this response sets out the exemption in full, as well as the factors Ofcom considered when deciding where the public interest lay.

*I would like this data as a total for each of the last three years, with March 31 as year-end.*

*If you are unable to provide three years of data, please provide two years of data.*

We do not retain data over these periods therefore we do not hold this information..

If you have any further queries, then please send them to [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk) quoting the reference number above in any future communications.

Yours sincerely

## Information Requests

If you are unhappy with the response you have received in relation to your request for information and/or consider that your request was refused without a reason valid under the law, you may ask for an internal review. If you ask us for an internal review of our decision, it will be subject to an independent review within Ofcom.

The following outcomes are possible:

- the original decision is upheld; or
- the original decision is reversed or modified.

### Timing

If you wish to exercise your right to an internal review **you should contact us within two months of the date of this letter**. There is no statutory deadline for responding to internal reviews and it will depend upon the complexity of the case. However, we aim to conclude all such reviews within 20 working days, and up to 40 working days in exceptional cases. We will keep you informed of the progress of any such review. If you wish to request an internal review, you should contact [information.requests@ofcom.org.uk](mailto:information.requests@ofcom.org.uk)

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Further information about this, and the internal review process can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office [here](#). Alternatively, the Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office  
Wycliffe House  
Water Lane  
Wilmslow  
Cheshire  
SK9 5AF

**Annex**

**Section 31 (1) of the FOI Act provides that:**

**Information which is not exempt information by virtue of section 30 is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice –**

**(a) the prevention or detection of crime;**

Factors for disclosure	Factors for withholding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disclosure would promote general transparency with the public in relation to the products/services Ofcom use, especially since these relate to ICT, and thereby increasing public confidence in how Ofcom carries out its work.</li> </ul>	<p>Disclosure of detailed information about Ofcom’s IT systems may aid malicious parties to attack the systems concerned. Release of this information will prejudice the prevention of crime by facilitating the possibility of a criminal offence being carried out. Hacking into an IT system is a criminal offence.</p>

**Reasons why public interest favours withholding information**

- We consider that, on balance, the public interest in withholding disclosure of the requested information outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.
  - Disclosure of detailed information about Ofcom’s IT systems could be used by offenders to hack into our systems. It is in the public interest for this not to happen to protect Ofcom against a potential cyber-attack so that Ofcom can carry on its work. The more specific any information is, the more useful it may be to an attacker.
  - The consequences of any successful attack on Ofcom’s systems are significant. They include loss of confidential and commercially sensitive stakeholder and government information and access to it by third parties. This would also impair trust and confidence in Ofcom as a regulator and impact our ability to carry out our functions.